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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/648,672	08/23/2000	Stewart Kevin Hester	5036	8001

7590

10/03/2003

Mr David Fox
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Bloomfield, CT 06002

EXAMINER

PAYNE, DAVID C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2633

DATE MAILED: 10/03/2003

7

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/648,672

Applicant(s)

HESTER ET AL.

Examiner

David C. Payne

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 August 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 21 and 28 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20, 22-27 and 29-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 August 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2 and 5. 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness

rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 6-10, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Merli et al. US 6,088,141 (Merli)*.

Re claim(s) 1, 6

Merli disclosed

An optical node for an optical network transporting an optical datastream, the node comprising: at least one port for optically coupling the node to at least one neighboring node (*figure 2*); a fault restoration element (*figure 2 #258*) to adjust the operation of the node in response to a fault; at least one optical sensor for measuring optical characteristics of the optical datastream at the node; a signal sensor configured to receive optical characteristics of the optical datastream from an upstream optical device; and a local controller (*figure 2 #258*) configured to activate the fault restoration element if optical characteristics have values corresponding to a potential fault requiring activation of the fault restoration element. (*e.g., col./line(s): 4/34-52*)

Merli does not separate the optical characteristics into a first set and second set. However, making parts separable is not patentable over the prior art. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to segment optical characteristics into different sets for the benefit of categorization of faults.

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Re claim(s) 8-10

Merli disclosed

a plurality of output ports for communicating the data stream to at least one other node via at least one optical fiber link; (*e.g.*, *figure 2* #206, #207)

a line switcher arranged to select an optical pathway for the data stream between two of the ports of the node in response to a line switch command; (*e.g.*, *col./line(s)*: 4/34-52)

a demultiplexing stage arranged to select at least one channel from said datastream, said stage including at least one redundant electro-optic element configured to replace a defective electro-optic element of said stage in response to an equipment switch command; (*e.g.*, *figure 2*) the controller initiating a line switch to isolate fault or an equipment switch to isolate an equipment fault. (*abstract*)

Re claim(s) 7, 13 and 14

Merli disclosed looking at the power over each channel (*e.g.*, *col./line(s)*: 2/64-67, 4/35-50).

3. Claims 2-5, 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Merli et al. US 6,088,141 (Merli)* in view of *Yemini et al. 5,528,516 (Yemini)*.

Re claim(s) 2-5, 11 and 12

Merli disclosed a local node processor but not a comprises a microprocessor having a software program residing on said micro-processor for generating the line switch commands. Yemini disclosed an apparatus with fault reporting and event correlation that uses a microprocessor and software (*figure 1a*). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the Yemini elements in the Merli invention since these systems facilitate human management of increasingly complex network problems (*e.g.*, *col./line(s)*: 1/30-45).

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4. Claims 15-20, 22-27, 29-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Merli et al. US 6,088,141 (Merli)* in view of *Fee et al. US 5,914,794 (Fee)*.

Re claim(s) 15, 20, 24-26, 35 and 36

Merli does not disclose at least one transceiver for communicating optical network status information via an inter-node optical communications channel with a neighboring node. Fee disclosed an element manager that communicates with the entire network (*e.g., figure 1, e.g., col./line(s): 4/42-56*). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to communicate status as Fee does so that communication is provided with a robust and highly fault tolerant fault orthogonal system (*e.g., col./line(s): 4/52-55*).

Re claim(s) 19, Merli disclosed a

a tributary module coupled to transport module, said multiplex module containing at least one transponder for linking data from a selected optical channel to at least one channel of an external tributary network; and a control module configured to generate the switch commands (*figure 2 #274*)

Re claim(s) 16, 22 and 23, Merli disclosed a

and initiating a line switch to redirect traffic to an alternate optical path (*figure 2 #208*) to restore data traffic if there is a loss in signal from the neighboring node and status reports are not being receiving from the neighboring node.

Re claim(s) 17, 18, 27 and 32

Merli does not disclose wherein the second set of optical characteristics include a channel map of active channels in the network. Fee does disclose maintaining a the nature and location of faults in the system (*e.g., col./line(s): 4/52-55*). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the

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art at the time of invention to maintain a map as does Fee for the quick and efficient rerouting of traffic.

Re claim(s) 29-31, 33 and 34

determining if the power level of one of the channels drops below a predetermined level and determining if the equipment switch restored power to the dropped channels and notifying neighboring channels of the result of the equipment switch (*e.g., col./line(s): 5/45-65*).

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 21 and 28 allowed.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David C. Payne whose telephone number is (703) 306-0004. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 7a-4p.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jason Chan can be reached on (703) 305-4729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

Dcp


JASON CHAN
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